UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.5/51/18
24 October 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-first session
FIFTH COMMITTEE
Agenda Item 116

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

Standards of accommodation for air travel

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly decisions 44/442 of 21 December 1989 and 46/450 of 20 December 1991, requesting the Secretary-General to continue to submit to it annual reports on standards of accommodation for air travel. It covers the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996. As also requested by the Assembly in its decision 40/455 of 18 December 1985 and section XIII of its resolution 45/248 A, of 21 December 1990, respectively, information is included on expenditures by the United Nations for first-class air travel and on the meetings attended by eminent persons for whom exceptions have been made for first-class air travel.

2. During the period under review, standards of accommodation for air travel were governed by General Assembly resolution 42/214 of 21 December 1987, in which the Assembly decided that all individuals, with the exception of the Secretary-General and the heads of delegations of the least developed countries to the regular and special sessions of the Assembly, whose travel was financed by United Nations organizations and programmes and who had been previously entitled to first-class accommodations, would be required to travel at the class immediately below first class. In the same resolution, the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to exercise his discretion in making exceptions to allow first-class travel on a case-by-case basis.

II. DELEGATION TRAVEL

3. As indicated in paragraph 2, General Assembly resolution 42/214 limits the payment of first-class accommodation by air to one representative of each Member

State designated as a least developed country attending the regular and special sessions of the Assembly. For the fiftieth session, for the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996, claims submitted to date involved 32 such journeys at a cost of $162,642.

4. The claims in respect of first-class travel for one representative of each Member State designated as a least developed country attending the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly involved 30 journeys at a cost of $135,149. 1/

III. EXCEPTIONS AUTHORIZED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

5. As stated above, in General Assembly resolution 42/214, the Secretary-General was authorized to exercise his discretion in making exceptions to allow first-class air travel on a case-by-case basis. In addition, business-class travel by air may be authorized by the Secretary-General in certain circumstances, in accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/249/Rev.3 of 29 March 1989.

6. Generally, in reviewing cases that may warrant an exception, the Secretary-General takes into consideration the following circumstances:

(a) A medical condition may exist necessitating a level of comfort not available in the normal standard of accommodation to which the traveller is entitled. Such cases are referred to the Director of the Medical and Employee Assistance Division of the Secretariat for recommendation. Exceptions may also be granted when a traveller is of an advanced age and the normal standard of travel would have a detrimental effect on the traveller's health;

(b) The normal standard of accommodation is not available and, owing to the exigencies of the service, the traveller is required to travel on a particular date. Cases also arise where accommodation at the normal entitlement is not available and the cost of daily subsistence allowance, while waiting for the next available seat, would be greater than the higher standard of travel;

(c) The traveller is considered an eminent person, such as a former head of State, or a prominent figure in political, humanitarian or cultural areas;

(d) Where the traveller is a prominent person who is donating his or her services free of charge to the Organization, and, in some cases, at a loss of personal income, such individuals may be accorded the standard of accommodation that they normally use when travelling;

(e) The traveller, after completing a full day of work, is required to travel through the night in order to resume work, attend meetings or present a paper at another location on the following morning or immediately upon arrival. Where such cases involve arduous journeys, it has been deemed reasonable that the standard of accommodation accorded to the traveller should provide the best rest possible while travelling, or provide the conditions most conducive to work while flying, or both.

7. In respect of exceptions to air travel authorized during the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996 owing to the circumstances mentioned above, the present report provides, in annexes I to IV, detailed information as to the additional cost of, and reasons for, such exceptions.

8. For travel during the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996, the Secretary-General exercised his discretion by authorizing, as an exception, 32 cases of first-class air travel. In addition, during the same period, the Secretary-General authorized business-class travel by air as an exception to the standards of accommodation in 30 cases.

9. It should be noted that, during the period under review, the Secretary-General or his designated representative was accompanied on all trips by a personal aide/security officer who travelled by air in first class.

10. The total additional cost incurred by the Organization for the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996 was $74,880, as compared to the total additional cost of $128,203 for the previous reporting period.

11. For purposes of comparison, tables 1 and 2 provide a summary, by category, of all exceptions granted during the present and previous reporting periods. It should be noted that the total number of exceptions authorized has decreased by more than half from 139 exceptions for the previous reporting period to 62 exceptions for the current reporting period. Similarly, the additional cost involved decreased by 42 per cent. The number of exceptions due to medical conditions or advanced age increased from 8 during the previous reporting period to 10; 9 of those exceptions were due to medical conditions. Exceptions under all other categories decreased. The most significant decrease was in the number of exceptions for eminent persons, which decreased from 81 cases during the previous reporting period to 18 cases during the current reporting period. The corresponding additional cost decreased by 69 per cent from $58,175 during the previous reporting period to $18,130 for the current reporting period. Exceptions due to the unavailability of the regular standard of accommodation decreased by more than half, and the corresponding additional cost decreased by 61 per cent.

12. In the context of monitoring adherence to the standards of accommodation for air travel, cases were identified in which air travel was undertaken at a standard of accommodation higher than normal entitlement, for which no exception had been sought or granted. In a number of these cases, subsequent ex post facto approval was sought for an exception to the standards of accommodation. The details of such ex post facto exceptions authorized by the Secretary-General for the previous reporting period, as well as those exceptions which were not included in the Secretary-General's report for the previous reporting period, are outlined in annex V to the present report.

Table 1. Summary of exceptions, 1 July 1995-30 June 1996

(Cost in United States dollars)

Reasons for exceptions	First class		Business class		Total	
	Number of trips	Additional cost	Number of trips	Additional cost	Number of trips	Additional cost
Medical condition or advanced age	2	2 491	8	10 103	10	12 594
Regular standard of accommodation not available	9	6 029	7	1 120	16	7 149
Eminent persons	7	12 137	11	5 993	18	18 130
Donating services free of charge to the Organization	2	7 055	4	7 230	6	14 285
Arduous journeys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Personal aides/security officer	12	22 722	0	0	12	22 722
Total	32	50 434	30	24 446	62	74 880

Table 2. Summary of exceptions, 1 July 1994-30 June 1995 a/

(Cost in United States dollars)

Reasons for exceptions	First class		Business class		Total	
	Number of trips	Additional cost	Number of trips	Additional cost	Number of trips	Additional cost
Medical condition or advanced age	3	3 968	5	7 757	8	11 725
Regular standard of accommodation not available	14	12 273	20	6 025	34	18 298
Eminent persons	15	21 042	66	37 133	81	58 175
Donating services free of charge to the Organization	2	11 220	4	3 088	6	14 308
Arduous journeys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Personal aides/security officer	10	25 697	0	0	10	25 697
Total	44	74 200	95	54 003	139	128 203

a/ Adjusted for ex post facto authorizations, as well as those authorizations which related to the previous reporting period but which were not included in the previous report (A/C.5/50/22).

Notes

1/ The total expenditure and the number of journeys are adjusted to reflect the claims for reimbursement of tickets for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly which were submitted after 30 June 1995 and which were not included in the report of the Secretary-General for the previous reporting period (A/C.5/50/22).

ANNEX I

Exceptions authorized owing to medical condition or advanced age, 1 July 1995-30 June 1996

	Designation of traveller	Itinerary a/	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A.	First class		
1.	Vice-President, United Nations Administrative Tribunal	New Delhi/Geneva/ New Delhi	2 240
2.	Council Member, United Nations University	Caracas/New York/ Caracas	251
	Total, A		2 491
B.	Business class		
1.	Staff member, Department for Development Support and Management Services	New York/Paris/ Geneva/Rome/ New York	608
2.	Staff member, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development	New York/Geneva/ New York	730
3.	Author, New Directions in International Development Assistance	London/New York/ London	935
4.	Chief, Montreal Protocol Unit, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	.../Paris/ New York	1 065
5.	Chief, Information and External Relations Division, United Nations Population Fund	New York/London/ New York	1 391
6.	Director, Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning, UNDP	New York/Paris/ London/New York	1 698
7.	Director, Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning, UNDP	New York/Geneva/ New York	1 656
8.	Director, Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning, UNDP	New York/Geneva/ New York	2 020
	Total, B		10 103
	Grand total, A and B		12 594

a/ The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

ANNEX II

Exceptions authorized when the regular standard of accommodation was not available, 1 July 1995-30 June 1996

	Designation of traveller	Itinerary a/	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A.	First class		
1.	Staff member, Department of Peacekeeping Operations	New York/ Port-au-Prince/ New York	218
2.	Special Representative of the Secretary-General	Port-au-Prince/ New York/ Port-au-Prince	348
3.	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia	Freetown/Accra	100
4.	Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Sierra Leone	Freetown/Accra/ ...	99
5.	Staff member, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	.../Ulaanbaatar/ Beijing/...	45
6.	Staff member, International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia	.../London/ New York/...	3 524
7.	Staff member, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	.../Abidjan/ Accra/...	7
8.	Staff member, UNEP	.../Abidjan/ Accra/...	7
9.	Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Human Resources Management, Department of Administration and Management	New York/Nairobi/ New York	1 681
	Total, A		6 029
B.	Business class		
1.	Freelance interpreter	Nairobi/Addis Ababa/Nairobi	28
2.	Freelance interpreter	Nairobi/Addis Ababa/Nairobi	28
3.	Freelance interpreter	Nairobi/Addis Ababa/Nairobi	28

	Designation of traveller	Itinerary a/	Additional cost (United States dollars)
4.	Staff member, ESCAP	Bangkok/Beijing/ ...	370
5.	Freelance interpreter	Hong Kong/ Bangkok/...	67
6.	Director, Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	New York/Oslo	119
7.	Consultant, UNDP	Auckland/Apia/ Auckland	480
	Total, B		1 120
	Grand total, A and B		7 149

a/ The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

ANNEX III

Exceptions authorized for eminent persons,
1 July 1995-30 June 1996

Designation of traveller	Itinerary	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A. First class		
Sasakawa Prize Selection Committee		
1. Chairman of the Committee	Bogotá/Geneva/ Bogotá	1 194
2. Committee member	Washington/Geneva/ Washington	3 328
3. Committee member	Jeddah/Geneva/ Jeddah	788
4. Committee member	London/Geneva/ London	0
5. Recipient of the Prize	London/Bangkok/ London	2 711
6. Recipient of the Prize	London/Bangkok/ London	2 711
7. Committee member	Bangkok/Geneva/ Bangkok	1 405
Total, A		12 137
B. Business class		
High-level Advisory Group for the Fourth World Conference on Women		
1. Member of the High-level Advisory Group for the Fourth World Conference on Women; Senate President Pro-Tempore of the Philippines	Manila/Beijing/ Manila	116
Symposium on the Question of Palestine		
2. Minister of Sports and Youth, Palestinian Authority	Jerusalem/Vienna/ Jerusalem	543
1995 Paul Hoffman Award lecture		
3. Former President of Costa Rica	San Jose/New York/ San Jose	1 220

	Designation of traveller	Itinerary	Additional cost (United States dollars)
	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), United Nations Environment Programme		
4.	Director, Institute for Environmental Studies, Amsterdam; Acting Chairman, STAP	Amsterdam/ Washington/ Amsterdam	659
5.	Director, Institute for Environmental Studies, Amsterdam; Member, STAP	Amsterdam/London/ Amsterdam	0
6.	Senior Scientist, Princeton University; Member, STAP	Princeton/London/ Princeton	1 816
7.	Director, African Energy Policy Research Network; Member, STAP	Nairobi/London/ Nairobi	385
8.	Member, Strategic Committee on Energy, Norway; Member, STAP	Oslo/London/Oslo	0
9.	President, Pan-African Union of Science and Technology; Former Chairman, STAP	Accra/London/Accra	312
10.	Research Professor, Oxford University; Member, STAP	London/Nairobi/ London	630
	Subtotal		3 802
	Informal consultations with the Executive Director of UNEP and Cabinet Ministers for Environmental Affairs		
11.	Minister of Environment, Ghana	Accra/London/Accra	312
	Total, B		5 993
	Grand total, A and B		18 130

ANNEX IV

Exceptions authorized for prominent persons donating their services free of charge to the Organization, 1 July 1995-30 June 1996

	Designation of traveller	Itinerary a/	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A.	First class		
1.	Special Representative, United Nations Children's Fund	.../Los Angeles/ London/...	1 685
2.	UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador	Tokyo/Atlanta/Miami/ Port-au-Prince/ New York/Tokyo	5 370
	Total, A		7 055
B.	Business class		
	Study on the United Nations role in post-conflict peace-building		
1.	Former Special Representative of the Secretary-General	London/New York/ London	2 500
	High-level Group on Development Strategy and Management of the Market Economy		
2.	Professor, College de France	Paris/New York/Paris	1 138
3.	Chief Economist, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	London/New York/ London	2 532
4.	Expert Economist	Washington/London	1 060
	Subtotal		4 730
	Total, B		7 230
	Grand total, A and B		14 285

a/ The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

ANNEX V

Exceptions relating to the previous reporting period, 1 July 1994-30 June 1995

Reason for exception/ designation of traveller	Itinerary a/	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A. First class		
Normal standard of accommodation not available		
1. Special Representative of the Secretary-General	Port-au-Prince/ New York/ Port-au-Prince	901
2. Staff member, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Nouakchott/Paris/ ...	350
Total, A		1 251
B. Business class		
Medical condition or advanced age		
1. Ambassador of Chile, participant in a seminar organized by United Nations Environment and Development-United Kingdom Committee and the United Nations Development Programme	New York/London/ New York	2 686
Normal standard of accommodation not available		
2. Staff member, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)	Addis Ababa/ Nairobi	36
3. Participant, Regional Workshop on Environmental Strategies for African Cities, Dakar, 26-30 June 1995	Nairobi/Dakar/ Nairobi	212
4. Participant, Regional Workshop on Environmental Strategies for African Cities	Nairobi/Dakar/ Nairobi	212
5. Participant, Regional Workshop on Environmental Strategies for African Cities	Nairobi/Dakar/ Nairobi	212

	Reason for exception/ designation of traveller	Itinerary a/	Additional cost (United States dollars)
6.	Participant, Regional Workshop on Environmental Strategies for African Cities	Nairobi/Dakar/ Nairobi	212
	Subtotal		884
	Exceptions authorized for eminent persons		
7.	Judge, International Court of Justice	The Hague/Vienna/ The Hague	798
	Total, B		4 368
	Total, A and B		5 619

a/ The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.